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Seventeenth
Annual Conference
of the New England
Governors
and the Eastern
Canadian Premiers

Montebello, Québec
June 7-9, 1989

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Dix-septième
Conférence annuelle
des Gouverneurs
de la Nouvelle-Angleterre
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The first Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers was held in 1973. The Governors of the six New England States and the Premiers of the five Provinces of Eastern Canada have since met each June to exchange views on issues of mutual interest and concern.

Informal at the outset, the Conference enabled its members to develop closer ties and to broaden their discussions. Programs of common interest were gradually undertaken and major projects launched. Over time, the Conference set up a number of line committees that have been responsible for significant achievements in such areas as tourism, agriculture, energy, economic development, the environment and transportation.

CONFERENCE STRUCTURE

The Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers is an international organization unique in North America. It has four components: the Annual Conference itself, the Coordinating Committee, the New England Governors' Conference and the Eastern Canadian Secretariat.

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Annual Conference brings together the Governors of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont, and the Premiers of New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Quebec. The Conference facilitates bilateral discussions among the Governors and Premiers in addition to meetings of the eleven leaders. Decisions are made by consensus.

THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

The Coordinating Committee is comprised of senior government officials appointed by each Governor and Premier. The Committee meets three times a year. Its general mandate is to ensure that the Annual Conference runs smoothly. It proposes the agenda, delegates responsibility among the States and Provinces for raising issues at the Annual Conference and follows up on decisions made by the Governors and Premiers. It also oversees the activities of the other Conference committees.

THE NEW ENGLAND GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE

This body consists of the six New England Governors, who meet to discuss matters of mutual interest. Its permanent Secretariat provides support staff for the Governors' undertakings with their Canadian counterparts. The Executive Director is American Co-Secretary of the Annual Conference.

THE EASTERN CANADIAN SECRETARIAT

In 1978, the Premiers of the Eastern Canadian Provinces asked the Secretary of the Council of Maritime Premiers to serve as Canadian Co-Secretary of the Annual Conference. Their intention was to create a structure similar to that of the New England Governors' Conference. The Council Secretariat has made its staff available to the Eastern Canadian Secretariat with the five participating Provinces sharing costs.

COMMITTEES

From the outset, Conference members felt the need to pool their resources in cooperative endeavours. Working groups and line committees examine specific issues and make recommendations to the Conference. Since 1973, these groups and committees have considered such areas as energy, agriculture, transportation, tourism, economic development and the environment.

There are currently five line committees: the Northeast International Committee on Energy (NICE), the Tri-Regional Economic Cooperation Committee, the Forest Productivity Working Group, the Committee on the Environment and the Committee on Sustainable Economic Development.

THE NORTHEAST INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE ON ENERGY

In 1978, recognizing that New England and Eastern Canada were facing similar situations in the field of energy and needed to diversify their energy sources while reducing their dependence on imported oil, the Governors and Premiers formed the Northeast International Committee on Energy (NICE). It consists of senior energy officials from the eleven administrations.

Since 1978, the Committee has undertaken numerous projects aimed at defining and solving the energy problems of the two regions. International conferences have led to in-depth study of issues such as the search for renewable energy sources, energy trade and security of supply as well as oil, gas and electricity development projects in both regions. The Committee has also produced publications on such topics as energy-efficient homes and statistical analyses of regional energy trends. As part of its International Energy Days Program, the Committee organized an unprecedented energy conservation and information exchange project based on twinning cities and towns in New England and Eastern Canada.

THE TRI-REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION COMMITTEE

The 1983 Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers chose to pay special attention to furthering trade between Quebec, Atlantic Canada and the New England States, and to the economic prospects of these areas. The concrete result was the creation of a Tri-Regional Economic Cooperation Committee, whose mandate is to draw up a working plan for increased economic and commercial exchanges among the three regions.

The Committee has organized three conferences on trade prospects - in 1984, 1985 and 1989; a symposium on business opportunities for high-technology research and development centres in 1986; a seminar on venture capital in 1987; and a sales contact centre in 1988.

1988 was a propitious year for trade. A highpoint was the ratification of the Free Trade Agreement by the United States Congress and the Canadian Parliament. Recent statistics indicate that trade in goods between Eastern Canada and New England nearly doubled between 1981 and 1987, from $4 billion to $7.5 billion. In this context, the Committee intends to continue serving as a vehicle for promoting economic and technological links between the regions.

THE FOREST PRODUCTIVITY WORKING GROUP

The forests of New England and Eastern Canada are a precious resource. They constitute the base of local forestry, recreational and tourism industries. Everything possible must therefore be done to ensure their viability and productivity. A growing number of signs, however, point to a decline in forest productivity that appears to be caused by air pollution.

To deal with this situation, the Conference in 1984 set up a working group whose mandate is to study declining forest productivity and to make recommendations aimed at ensuring the long-term viability of this vital resource.

In 1988, the Forest Productivity Working Group called for the immediate implementation of an atmospheric control program to counter the negative impact of air pollution on forests and other resources in Eastern Canada and New England. The Conference subsequently decided to ask federal authorities of both countries to establish a comprehensive air quality monitoring system in wooded areas threatened by the long-distance transport of air pollutants and acid precipitation.

THE COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Atmospheric pollution, particularly acid precipitation, damages aquatic ecosystems and is a serious threat to forests. It accelerates the deterioration of buildings, historical monuments and materials in general, and is a potential risk to human health. Faced with the magnitude of this problem, the Conference in 1984 created the Committee on the Environment. Its mandate is to promote exchanges of scientific data, coordi-

nate policies, strategies and control plans, and submit to the Conference an annual report on the latest environmental developments. The Committee's first priority was to draw up a regional program for reducing sulphur dioxide (SO_2) emissions.

The Committee on the Environment has carried out projects designed to heighten public awareness of the problems linked to air pollution and, more specifically, to acid precipitation. In 1985, the Conference adopted a ten-year regional clean-up plan calling for a 32 percent reduction in sulphur dioxide emissions. The same year, the Committee organized a conference on acid rain which brought several Governors and Premiers to Quebec City. In May 1987, it launched an Acid Rain Awareness Week in the New England States and the Eastern Canadian Provinces that has since become an annual event.

In June 1987, the Committee adopted the "Principles of a Good Neighbour Environmental Relationship". These principles provide that participating governments will consult one another when a project is likely to have a serious environmental impact on the territory of a neighbouring Conference member. They will also advise other governments when a natural or technological accident may have a transboundary impact.

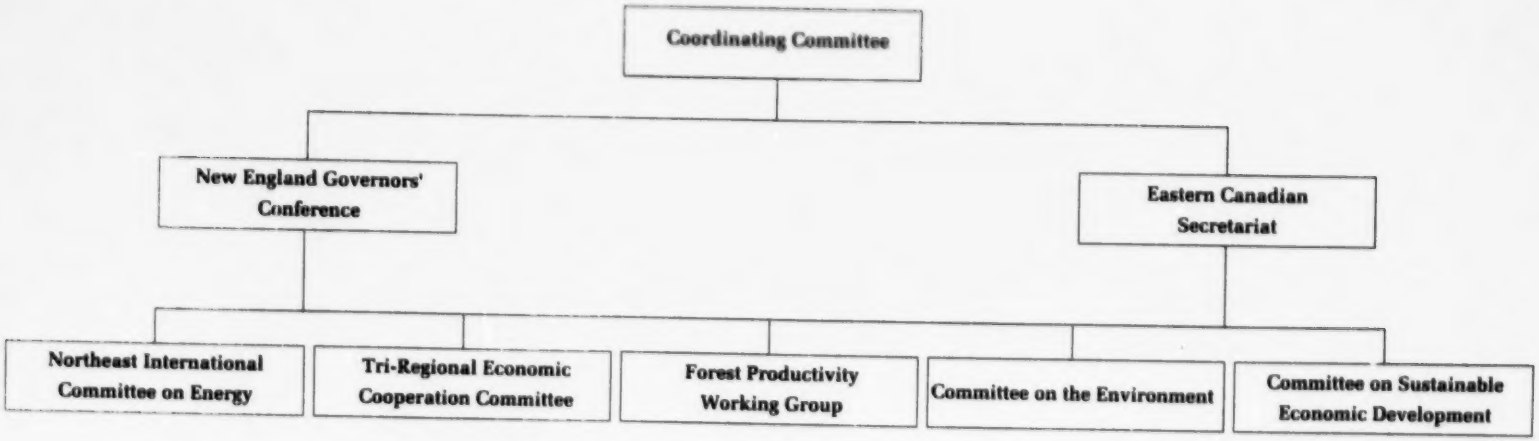
Finally, in June 1988, the Committee on the Environment published a map of acid rain and watershed sensitivity covering the area served by the Conference. The map was designed for both specialists and the general public.

THE COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Committee on Sustainable Economic Development was created at the 1988 Annual Conference. Its mandate is to devise a definition of the concept of sustainable development that reflects the concern of the member governments, to examine the ramifications of its implementation and to report to the 17th Conference.

ORGANIZATION CHART

Conference of
New England Governors and
Eastern Canadian Premiers



MAIN ISSUES OF THE 17th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 1989 Annual Conference, as Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa announced last year at Newport, will focus on the environment. The specific issues to be addressed are acid rain and sustainable development.

ACID RAIN

Significant amounts of acid precipitation have been measured in both the New England States and the Eastern Canadian Provinces. Its effects on aquatic and forest ecosystems, buildings and monuments and possibly even human health are insidious. Acid precipitation has also been identified as the main source of transboundary pollution. Over the past decade, scientists, governments, the public and the media have grown increasingly aware of what is at stake.

Acid precipitation originates to a large extent in facilities that burn coal, oil and gas. Foundries, refineries, some industrial processes and motor vehicles also produce sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide, two of the leading pollutants. Pollutants are transformed in the atmosphere while being carried over long distances and fall to earth as moisture - acid rain, snow or fog - or as dry deposits.

In response to concerns about environmental deterioration, the Conference in 1984 created the Committee on the Environment. The Committee's work led to the adoption in 1985 of a regional plan for reducing sulphur dioxide emissions. The plan calls for the total sulphur dioxide emissions of New England and Eastern Canada to be reduced by 32 percent, from 2,200,000 metric tonnes in 1980 to 1,500,000 in 1995.

Approval of the sulphur dioxide emission control plan helped strengthen the sense of solidarity between the New England States and the Eastern Canadian Provinces. Each government was encouraged to unilaterally adopt measures to reduce emissions originating within its own territory.

Through its Committee on the Environment, the Conference intends to continue evaluating the impact of atmospheric changes. It will also continue to play a leadership role in the acid rain awareness campaign. It is currently examining the possibility of extending the reduction plan to cover emissions of nitrogen oxide, a component of acid precipitation, and directing its attention to other environmental problems as well.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Committee on Sustainable Economic Development was established in 1988. Its mandate is to examine the ramifications of the concept of sustainable development for the region and to report to the 1989 meeting The Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers is the first binational organization in North America to deal with this issue.

Recognizing the direct link between economic growth and environmental protection and enhancement, the Governors and Premiers wish to establish a policy of economic growth oriented toward the more rational use of natural resources.

Publication of the groundbreaking work of the World Commission on Environment and Development gave impetus to this concern. Natural resources are an important ingredient of economic development for the New England States and the Eastern Canadian Provinces. The measured use of these resources is therefore fundamental to maintaining employment while preserving the natural environment.

The eleven governments have already undertaken specific actions putting elements of a sustainable development strategy into practice.

These include recycling and land use policies. Sustainable development goes well beyond these initiatives, however, for it puts the emphasis squarely on long-term planning and on integrating economic development and environmental protection.

The Conference recognizes the importance of adopting strategies for sustainable development. In this perspective, it plans to continue working toward the unequivocal implementation of this concept in the New England States and the Eastern Canadian Provinces.